

Memorandum for: RECORD

**Subject: INF: West European Responses to
Possible Soviet Moves**

The attached postulates possible responses of the INF basing countries and France to hypothetical Soviet moves designed to postpone initial NATO deployments of INF.

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INF: West European Responses to Possible Soviet Moves

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Summary

The Soviets are still touting Andropov's offer in August to "liquidate" a considerable number of SS-20s as their final word on INF. As things now stand, this approach poses little threat to NATO's deployment schedule.

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The plenary session on October 12 brought nothing new from the Soviets. Since the beginning of this round, they had been saying that on that date they would undertake an assessment of the status of the negotiations, hinting that if there were no signs of progress they might call an early recess and perhaps even a suspension.

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There remains a good chance the Soviets will come up with a new offer aimed at inducing one or more European countries to ask for delays in initial deployments. If so, the USSR may want to act soon. Such a last-ditch effort could take the form of an offer of substantial cuts in SS-20 launchers, perhaps coupled with a threat to suspend negotiations until the US makes a "constructive" response. Soviet revival of the walk-in-the-woods formula is also conceivable, though less likely.

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This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] the Office of European Analysis. Questions and comments may be addressed to the Chief of the European Issues Division [redacted]

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Cuts in SS-20 Launchers

There have been a number of hints that the Soviets are at least contemplating proposals to reduce their triple-warhead SS-20 launchers in Europe according to a formula that purports to create parity with British and French warheads. They have even hinted that they might be willing to count [] French and British missiles as having one warhead each and to reduce the triple-warhead SS-20s opposite NATO to 54 launchers. This would preserve Moscow's position on the need to take account of the British and French systems and on the unacceptability of any agreement that "sanctions" US deployment. []

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A Soviet offer of this sort would appeal to West European public opinion and leave governments divided on the issue. British and French opposition would remain strong, in part because the proposal would impede their missile modernization plans. The Kohl government would want to proceed with initial deployments to prevent a Soviet monopoly of INF in Europe, but would have to deal with massive public resistance. The German ability to proceed with deployment would be key to determining the Italian and Belgian positions. The Dutch almost certainly would ask privately for a delay in deployments. []

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"Walk-in-the Woods" Formula

This, or something like it, would pose a greater threat to the deployment schedule. The formula, however, requires the Soviets to abandon their position on the British and French systems and to accept some US deployments. []

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If the Soviets should nonetheless make such concessions, the public response in West Germany might be strong enough to force Kohl to ask for a delay in deployments. Kohl and Genscher, by publicly blaming Moscow last July for rejecting the formula, have given it the appearance of having CDU/CSU support. It already has been embraced by the Social Democrats. []

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Other Allied governments would also face formidable public relations problems. They, like the Germans, would be forced to convince skeptical electorates that the Soviet concessions were duplicitous, and do so in a heated political atmosphere characterized by anti-INF demonstrations and probably some violence. []

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Walkout

Moscow's breaking off the talks without first making an appealing proposal would guarantee initial deployments on schedule. Preceded by an attractive offer, however, a Soviet

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walkout would increase Allied pressure on Washington to make a counteroffer. This is essentially the scenario postulated by the US Delegation and Embassy Moscow. [REDACTED]

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A walkout following an attractive offer, however, would detract from its appeal. Therefore, if the Soviets still hold any hope--however slim--for delaying deployments, they may try such softer devices as calling an early recess or attending plenary sessions simply to listen. [REDACTED]

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A Soviet walkout before deployments begin--possibly when the first equipment deliveries are publicized--probably would signal that they have given up on the negotiations and herald a shift to more aggressive tactics designed to maximize tensions within NATO. [REDACTED]

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